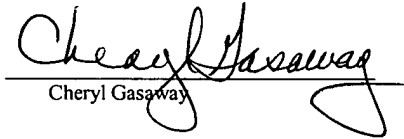


IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Application No. :
Applicant : Ronald J. Schnipke et al.
Filed :
Tech. Center/Art Unit :
Examiner :

Attorney File No. : SNPKX 108 DIV 1
Customer No. : 002555
Confirmation Number :
For : Pallet for Surgical Stapling Cartridge

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: MAIL STOP PATENT APPLICATION, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on 12-30-03 (date).


Cheryl Gasaway

MAIL STOP PATENT APPLICATION
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450,
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Preliminary Amendment

Please amend the above-identified patent application as follows:

Amendments to the Specification begin on page 2 of this paper.

Amendments to the Claims are reflected in the listing of claims which begins on page 3 of this paper.

Remarks begin on page 8 of this paper.